

beat time. A lover's thoughts are moved by the sight of his mistress, or by the recollections that are awakened by a letter from her. In some cases an impression arouses a single appropriate impulse: a loud, unexpected sound will always make us start—the first step of a movement to escape. But generally sensory impressions or recollections have the effect, as it were, of starting a complicated arrangement of machinery in which a number of impulses are set free to act in combination or in opposition. The result will depend very largely upon habit, or upon the mood we are in at the time, that is to say, upon the effect that has been produced by preceding impulses. The crying of an infant may at one time move us to pity, at another time to anger. So the sight of a friend may, on different occasions, evoke feelings of kindness or of impatience.

Impulses are also released by the tendency to imitate. A chicken is led to peck by the sight of its mother pecking: it may be stimulated by tapping with the finger, or a pencil. Noise impels a canary to sing its loudest; dogs bark when they hear other dogs. The cruel feelings which are gratified by a bull-fight may be evoked by the excitement of the surrounding spectators. We are stirred by fashion to change the manner of our dress. Self-control is most strongly inculcated by example—by a practical stimulus, that is to say, to our imitative faculty.

We have compared instinctive

impulses to  
main-springs that are released by the  
touching of  
a catch. In some cases they are set  
to a time,  
like an alarm-clock, and are released  
automati-  
cally on the expiry of the period. The  
growth of  
an individual, from its first embryo  
stage to  
maturity, is controlled by a number of  
impulses  
that act at definite periods and in a  
definite order.